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FPM-TURNER: 390

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ASSOCIATED PRESS WRITER

NAPLES, ITALY (AP) - Gen. STANFIELD TURNER, LEAVING HIS NATO POST TO TAKE OVER AS DIRECTOR OF THE U.S. CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY, SAID TODAY THE WESTERN ALLIANCE MUST IMPROVE ITS MILITARY READINESS TO DETER WHAT HE CALLED CONTINUED SOVIET MILITARY EXPANSION.

TURNER GAVE A BRIEF ADDRESS AT A CEREMONY IN WHICH HE RELINQUISHED COMMAND OF NATO'S SOUTHERN EUROPEAN FORCES, GROUPING THE UNITED STATES, BRITAIN, ITALY, TURKEY AND GREECE.

HE DESCRIBED HIS RELINQUISHMENT OF COMMAND AS PREMATURE IN SEVERAL WAYS.

"I SAY PREMATURE BECAUSE THERE IS STILL WORK TO BE DONE IN DRAWING ATTENTION TO THE IMPORTANCE OF THIS SOUTHERN REGION TO THE WHOLE OF NATO AND IN FACT TO THE ECONOMIC AND POLITICAL WELLBEING OF ALL THE WESTERN WORLD."

"I SAY PREMATURELY ALSO BECAUSE THERE IS HEALING YET TO BE DONE TO THE CONTINUING DIVISIONS IN OUR PART OF THE ALLIANCE," AN APPARENT REFERENCE TO TENSIONS BETWEEN GREECE AND TURKEY.

"IT IS PREMATURE AS WELL BECAUSE THERE IS A CONTINUING NEED TO IMPROVE OUR MILITARY READINESS IN ORDER TO DETER AN ADVERSARY WHOSE MILITARY STRENGTH CONTINUES TO EXPAND FOR REASONS WE CANNOT FATHOM," TURNER SAID.

GEN. ALEXANDER HAIG, NATO'S EUROPEAN COMMANDER IN CHIEF, PRESENTED TURNER WITH THE DEFENSE DISTINGUISHED SERVICE MEDAL IN THE NAME OF PRESIDENT CARTER.

HAIG CALLED TURNER AN "ILLUSTRIOUS COMMANDER" AND EXPRESSED CONFIDENCE THAT HE BRINGS HIGH QUALIFICATIONS TO THE CIA.

HAIG APPOINTED ITALY'S GEN. LUIGI TOMASUOLO AS ACTING COMMANDER OF NATO'S SOUTHERN FORCES UNTIL A NEW PERMANENT COMMANDER IS APPOINTED. OFFICIALS SAID PRIVATELY THIS WAS EXPECTED WITHIN A MATTER OF WEEKS.

These comments represent the initial and tentative reaction of the CIA Operations Center and of the appropriate analytic component in the Agency.

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THE CEREMONY BEGAN WITH A MIXED FORCES BAND PLAYING THE NATIONAL ANTHEMS OF THE FIVE NATIONS WHICH FORM THE SOUTHERN NATO COMMAND.

GREECE HAS STAFF MEMBERS AT THE COMMAND ALTHOUGH IT ENDED ITS TROOP COMMITMENT FOLLOWING THE TURKISH INVASION OF CYPRUS IN 1975.

THE COMMUNIST MAYOR OF NAPLES, MAURIZIO VALENZI, WAS AMONG THE GUESTS. HE HAS ATTENDED SIMILAR CEREMONIES BEFORE AND ALSO BEEN A GUEST ABOARD U.S. 6TH FLEET SHIPS.

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